

Producer Responsibility to to Tackle Plastic Pollution

CalRecycle Packaging Workshop
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Kathryn Hannay,
California Trash Map

U.S. EPA, 2011:



- 32 million tons of plastic waste were generated.
- 14 million tons of plastics as containers and packaging, about 11 million tons as durable goods such as appliances, and almost 7 million tons as nondurable goods, such as plates and cups.
- Only 8 percent of the total plastic waste generated in 2011 was recovered for recycling.



80% of Marine Litter is from Land-based sources and most = Single-Use Plastic

food/drink

Clear Targets
from Coastal
Cleanup Data



fishing

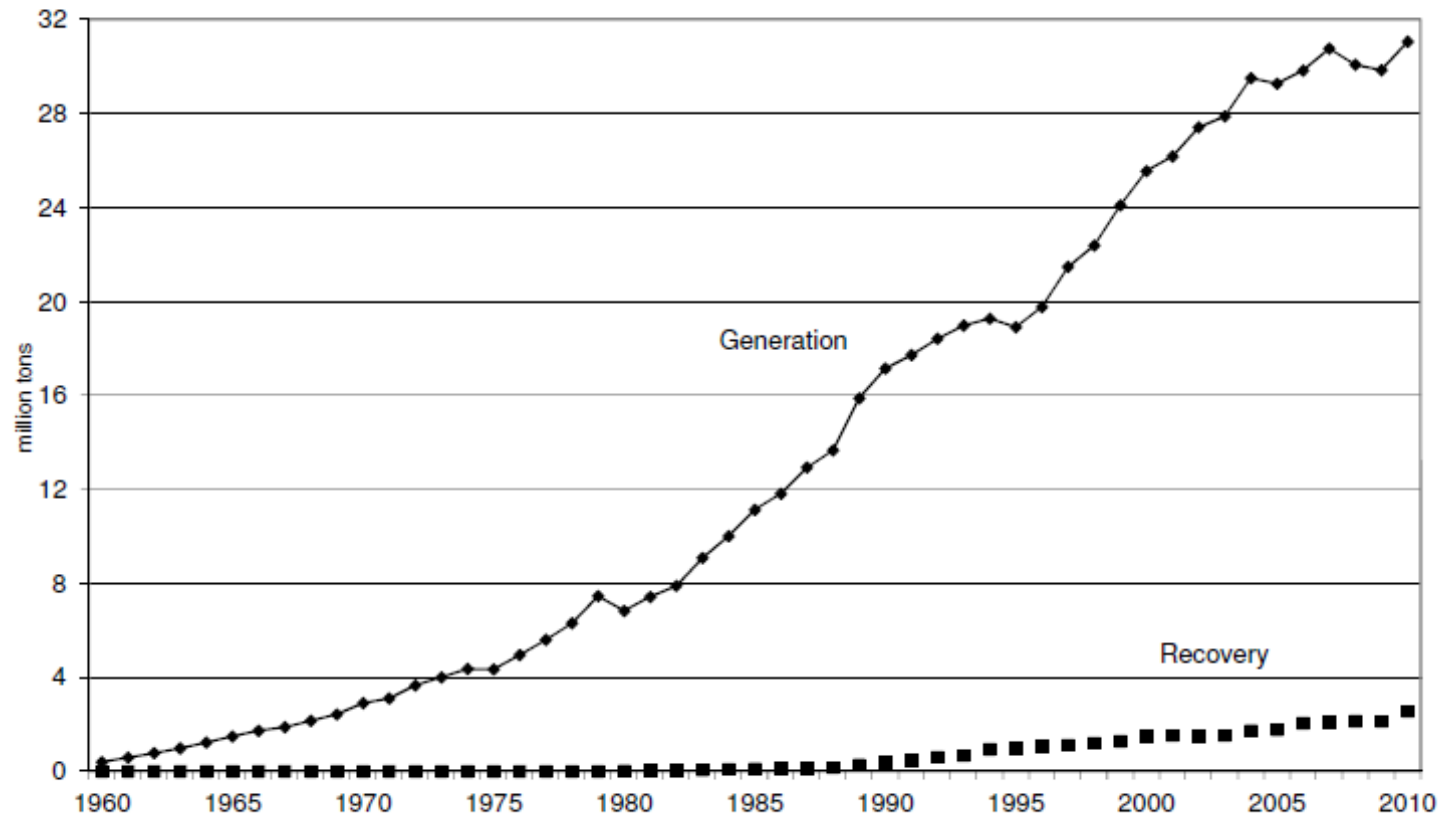


smoking



We Need Policies to Reduce Generation

Figure 9. Plastics generation and recovery, 1960 to 2010



We Need Companies to Internalize Externalities:

Economic & Environmental Impacts of Single-use packaging.

\$428,000,000 annually spent by California's cities and towns covers the cost of six activities related to reducing solid waste in waterways.

~ "Waste in our Waters", NRDC/Kier Report, 2013



SOLUTION: Extended Producer Responsibility for Single-Use Plastic Packaging

OECD defines EPR as an *environmental policy approach in which a producer's responsibility for a product is extended to the post-consumer stage of a product's life cycle.*



Photo, sridgway, via Flickr

Policy Goals in Addressing Marine Plastic Pollution

We want policies to signal producers to help:

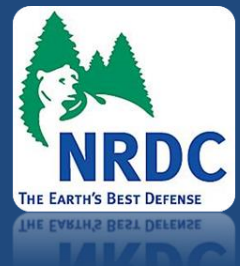
- 1) Reduce generation: Incentivize industry, impact trends, aim for game-changing innovation & reduction while maintaining or enhancing recyclability.
- 2) Capture more waste: Expand what's working
 - More recycling – augment with monitoring & assessment
 - Implementation of Trash TMDLs and Statewide Trash Policy
 - More cleanup and interventions
- 3) Monitor & Assess results:
 - Better understand pathways
 - Practice adaptive management



How Do We Achieve These Policy Goals?

Add these elements into Product Stewardship or EPR for Packaging Programs:

- Explicitly include aquatic impact minimization among goals.
- LCA's too limited in downstream evaluation of impacts. Don't stop at "disposal".
- For the aquatic environment, focus on the right products: lightweight single-use plastic and composites that blow away and are difficult/impossible to recycle.
- **Prioritize incentives to reduce generation** – spark game changing innovation, especially in reusables.
- Recycling enhancement is necessary but not sufficient. We must support expansion of Trash TMDLs, cleanup etc.
- Set targets, develop protocol and ensure robust oversight through partnerships between range of relevant agencies & stakeholders.
- Work across agencies to develop robust monitoring & assessment protocols. Use findings to practice adaptive management.



Thank You.

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Photo: Jim Patterson

